



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Southern District of Georgia*

*Post Office Box 8970
Savannah, GA 31412
(912) 652-4422 / FAX (912) 652-4805*

*100 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 21, 2006**

**CONTACT: Edmund A. Booth, Jr.
First Assistant U.S. Attorney
(706) 724-0517**

**SHRIMPER'S "DEATH" A FAKE. SHRIMPER AND WIFE
ARRESTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES**

Lisa Godbey Wood, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that **Kevin Klarell Washington**, age 32, and his wife, **Lavonnia Denise Washington**, age 29, have been arrested on federal drug charges. Kevin Washington was arrested on June 20, 2006 in Orlando, Florida on a warrant for allegedly distributing five grams or more of crack cocaine in the Southern District of Georgia. Washington is scheduled to appear in the United States District Court in Orlando. Lavonnia Washington, of Savannah, Georgia, was arrested today in Savannah on a warrant charging her with conspiracy to possess and distribute crack cocaine. She will appear in the United States District Court in Savannah at which time bail may be considered.

Kevin Washington has been missing since September 13, 2005 after reportedly falling off the shrimp boat "God's Mercy" in Ossabaw Sound. The United States Coast Guard engaged in intensive search and rescue operations in Ossabaw Sound after Washington's crew mate made an emergency 911 call from a cellular telephone aboard the boat. In recent weeks, there were

reports made to law enforcement which indicated Washington was still alive. Efforts to locate him then began.

The criminal investigation remains active and further charges and arrests in connection with the fake death and disappearance are possible. The investigation is being conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Coast Guard Investigative Service. The Southern District of Georgia will handle any prosecution.

Wood emphasized that an arrest is not evidence of guilt and the defendants are presumed innocent under the law.

#####

37-06